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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 005480

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - PRESIDENT BUSH AND U.S.  
POLICY - IRAQ - MIDDLE EAST MIDDLE EAST - GAZA PULLOUT  
PARIS - FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

PRESIDENT BUSH AND U.S. POLICY - IRAQ - MIDDLE EAST  
MIDDLE EAST - GAZA PULLOUT

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

CATHOLIC LA CROIX DEVOTES ITS LEAD AND EDITORIAL STORY TO THE  
GAZA PULLOUT, NOTING "THE COURAGE OF SHARON AND THE SETTLERS"  
WHICH IN TURN FORCES THE PALESTINIANS TO "SHOW THE SAME  
COURAGE" IF PEACE IS TO BE EXPECTED. LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION  
CARRIES AN OP-ED BY RENOWNED WRITER MAREK HALTER WHO CALLS FOR  
"SECULAR REALISTS" TO TAKE OVER ON BOTH SIDES "FROM RELIGIOUS  
EXTREMISTS" IN ORDER TO INSURE PEACE. IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE  
FIGARO AMERICAN STUDIES EXPERT AT THE SORBONNE ANDRE KASPI  
PENS AN OP-ED ON THE LONG-LASTING AND "SPECIAL" RELATIONSHIP  
THAT BINDS THE U.S. AND ISRAEL. (SEE PART C)

LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE HEADLINES: "IRAQ: GEORGE BUSH AND  
AMERICA'S DOUBTS." INSIDE, CORRESPONDENT CORINE LESNES REPORTS  
ON THE INCREASING NUMBER OF U.S. CASUALTIES IN IRAQ AND ON THE  
LATEST U.S. POLLS ON AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE IRAQI  
INTERVENTION. HER ARTICLE NOTES PRESIDENT BUSH'S CONFAB AT HIS  
TEXAS RANCH WITH SECRETARIES RICE AND RUMSFELD. LESNES ALSO  
REPORTS ON GUANTANAMO AND A U.S. MILITARY PLAN AIMING TO EMPTY  
THE PRISON OF ABOUT HALF OF ITS DETAINEES.

IN A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO REPORTS ON  
THE JIHADIST THREAT MADE IN FRENCH ON AL-ARABIYA TELEVISION:  
"WESTERN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES ARE CONCERNED BY THESE CALLS  
MADE BY A GENERATION OF 'JIHADISTS' BORN IN THE WEST (GREAT  
BRITAIN, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS.) PARIS WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE  
TO IDENTIFY ONE OF THESE MEN WHO COULD BE A FRENCH CITIZEN."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

PRESIDENT BUSH AND U.S. POLICY - IRAQ - MIDDLE EAST

"PRESIDENT BUSH'S CRUCIAL SUMMER"  
PIERRE ROUSSELIN IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/12): "WITH  
HIS POPULARITY RATINGS AT THEIR LOWEST, PRESIDENT BUSH KNOWS  
HOW MUCH IS RIDING ON HIS POLICIES THIS SUMMER. AT THE TOP OF  
THE LIST THERE IS THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE GAZA PULLOUT.  
PRESIDENT BUSH AND ARIEL SHARON ARE HAND IN HAND IN THIS  
PERILOUS ADVENTURE. IT IS IN BUSH'S BEST INTEREST THAT THE  
PULLOUT BE SUCCESSFUL. IRAQ IS ALSO IN A DECISIVE PHASE. THE  
DEADLINE FOR THE CONSTITUTION IS SET FOR MONDAY. AND IN SPITE  
OF THE SERIOUS QUESTIONS STILL UNANSWERED, THE BUSH  
ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO THINK THAT THE DEADLINE WILL BE  
MET. FOR BUSH, A COMPROMISE THAT WOULD SATISFY THE SHIITES,  
THE SUNNIS AND THE KURDS WOULD BE A BEAUTIFUL SUCCESS. THAT  
WOULD GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE GENEROUS IDEA OF 'DEMOCRATIZING'  
THE ARAB WORLD. CONVERSELY, FAILURE ON THE CONSTITUTION WOULD  
MAKE THINGS WORSE FOR THE U.S. AND ITS COALITION ALLIES.  
PUBLIC OPINION IN THE U.S. IS INCREASINGLY SHOWING  
DISSATISFACTION WITH THE WAR. FOR PRESIDENT BUSH THE LATEST  
POLLS INDICATE THAT THERE IS A WORRISOME EROSION OF POPULAR  
SUPPORT FOR HIS POLICIES. AS HIS SECOND TERM PROGRESSES, IT  
WILL BECOME HARDER AND HARDER FOR THE PRESIDENT TO BOUNCE BACK  
IN SPITE OF A GOOD ECONOMIC INDICATORS. THE HARD-LINE POSITIONS  
ADOPTED BY IRAN AND NORTH KOREA ARE NOT EXTRANEIOUS TO THIS  
LOSS OF PUBLIC SUPPORT. TO REGAIN SOME OF THE LOST LUSTER THE  
PRESIDENT IS IN DIRE NEED OF GOOD NEWS."

MIDDLE EAST - GAZA PULLOUT

"COURAGE"  
FRANCOIS ERNENWEIN IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (08/12): "THE PULLOUT  
FROM GAZA COLLIDES WITH THE MYTHICAL TALE OF GREATER ISRAEL.  
FOR SOME SETTLERS, SHARON'S PRAGMATIC CHOICE IS ALSO A TRAGIC  
LOSS. WE MUST NOT TURN OUR BACKS ON THEIR FEELINGS OF SADNESS.  
FOR THE SETTLERS, SHARING WILL REQUIRE COURAGE AND TIME.  
SHARON'S COURAGE LIES IN THE RISK HE HAS TAKEN FOR A CHANCE TO  
A COMPROMISE. IT IS NOW THE PALESTINIANS' TURN TO SHOW  
COURAGE. FOR THEM, GAZA LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE A POISONED GIFT.  
THE ISRAELI PULLOUT IMPLIES ASSUMING CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY. TENSION BETWEEN PRAGMATISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM IS NOT A MONOPOLY OF ISRAEL. IT IS ALSO AT THE HEART OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, WHICH HAS BEEN WEAKENING ABBAS'S AUTHORITY. AND THIS IS WHERE SHARON HAS BEEN AT HIS CRAFTIEST: THE COURAGE HE HAS IMPOSED ON HIMSELF IS THE SAME COURAGE HE IS NOW DEMANDING FROM THE SETTLERS BUT WILL ALSO DEMAND TOMORROW FROM HIS PALESTINIAN COUNTERPART."

"U.S.- ISRAEL: A VERY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP"

ANDRE KASPI OF THE SORBONNE UNIVERSITY IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/12): "PRESIDENT BUSH HAS SINCE THE START OF HIS SECOND TERM TAKEN ON MORE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. THE COMING DAYS WILL BE DECISIVE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND WILL RE-ENFORCE EVEN MORE THE U.S. ROLE IN THAT REGION. THE U.S. WILL HELP THE PALESTINIANS BUILD A DEMOCRATIC STATE BUT WILL ASK MORE OF THEM. THE U.S. WILL HAVE ITS SAY ON THE SECURITY FENCE AND ON THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM. IN SHORT, IT WILL NOT BE ISRAEL THAT WILL DICTATE ITS VISION OF PEACE TO THE U.S. ISRAEL IS A FAITHFUL ALLY OF THE U.S., NOT ALWAYS AMENABLE, NOT ALWAYS DOCILE, BUT IT IS NOT A VASSAL. IT PREFERS TO HANDLE ITS OWN SECURITY. BUT IT CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT AMERICA'S MATERIAL, POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL AID. THE U.S. FOR ITS PART WANTS TO SAFEGUARD ITS FRIENDSHIPS AND INTERESTS IN THE ARAB-MUSLIM WORLD. HENCE THE VERY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL, WHICH DOES NOT PRECLUDE DIVERGENCES AND TEMPORARY TENSION. THE RELATIONSHIP IS AND WILL REMAIN ASYMMETRICAL. IT POSSESSES NEVERTHELESS AN UNDENIABLE PRICELESS QUALITY: IT IS LONG-LASTING." HOFMANN